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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JOHN BOOZMAN, a Senator from the State of Arkansas.

PRAYER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Today's opening prayer will be offered by Dr. Robert Lewis, of Fellowship Bible Church, Little Rock, AR.

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Heavenly Father, we give thanks for this new day and the hope that lies within it. We have been a blessed nation, not by accident but by this: In You, God, we trust. Thank You for the men and women of this distinguished body, who will again rise to face the immense challenge that will mark this day along with the special opportunities that it holds for good. I pray You will make this body ready for both.

In these turbulent times, empower their work with Your Spirit. Give them a difference making wisdom only You possess. Protect them from small ambitions. Call each heart here up to the higher ways of humility, understanding, and much needed unity. Help these leaders seek what is right and best for all in this Nation: the weak and the strong, the rich and the wanting, the great and the small; and let their work here today end tonight as a credit, not a deficit, to our Nation's life-giving legacy of liberty and justice for all.

Bless this Chamber, Father. Make us better through them, and lead us all forward in the ways of righteousness for Your greater glory.

We pray this in Jesus' Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Repub-

lic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, October 17, 2019.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JOHN BOOZMAN, a Senator from the State of Arkansas, to perform the duties of the Chair.

CHUCK GRASSLEY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. BOOZMAN thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH). The Senator from Arkansas.

WELCOMING DR. ROBERT LEWIS

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam President, I would like to take a moment, first of all, to thank Chaplain Black for all that he does here. The Senate is a much better place as a result of having him around.

I would also like to take a moment to thank Dr. Robert Lewis for delivering the opening prayer in the Senate today.

Robert and I had the opportunity to play football together at the University of Arkansas. He was a very good football player and had the gift of smack. He would hit you. He had a tremendous work ethic and character, and we all knew that he would do well in whatever he decided to do.

Robert is, today, a renowned pastor, a best-selling author, a passionate speaker, and a Christian visionary. He

has developed a curriculum that has reached over 1 million men worldwide in churches, on college campuses, in corporate boardrooms, and in correctional facilities.

Robert's program, the Men's Fraternity, provides men with an encouraging process of teaching them how to live lives of authentic manhood, as modeled by Jesus Christ and directed by the Word of God. The program was designed to help men come together and strengthen each other through weekly sessions that combine biblical teaching and small group interaction.

For 21 years, Robert served as the directional leader of the Fellowship Bible Church of Little Rock. During that time, the church grew from a few hundred members to over 5,000, and it was widely recognized as being one of the most innovative and influential churches in America.

Robert helped to bring Downline, which is a citywide discipleship ministry, to Little Rock, where he continues to serve as a part-time instructor. He continues to be involved in his local church and beyond, and he ministers nationally and across the world.

Robert and Sherard, his wife, have been married for over 40 years. They have four children and three grandchildren.

Serving as the guest chaplain is an incredible honor. I am thankful for Robert's ministry, and I am so pleased that he could be here to offer an invocation of asking God to guide and bless the efforts of Congress and America's leaders.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

REMEMBERING ELIJAH CUMMINGS

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, first, this morning, I join colleagues on

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both sides of the Capitol in expressing our grief and sadness at the passing of our House colleague, Chairman ELIJAH CUMMINGS.

In his over more than two decades in the House of Representatives, CUMMINGS became a living legend in his native Baltimore. By all accounts, he was a powerful and passionate voice on the national stage and was a strong advocate for his neighbors, his district, and his values. He counted close friends and admirers from all across the political spectrum.

The Capitol will lower its flags today to mark this significant loss and remember a life well lived. The Senate unites our prayers with those in the House for Maya, ELIJAH's wife; for his children; and for all of the colleagues, friends, and staff who will miss him greatly.

TURKEY AND SYRIA

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, on an entirely different matter, I was encouraged to see yesterday's display of bipartisan concern in the House of Representatives for sustaining America's global leadership and, specifically, over the damaging impact of hastily withdrawing that leadership from Syria.

Back in January, I led a forward-looking debate here in the Senate on these very issues. I sponsored an amendment to S. 1 that earned the support of a bipartisan supermajority—70 Senators. We went on the record as opposing a premature exit from Syria or Afghanistan and emphasized the need for sustained American leadership in the fight against terrorism.

I was disappointed when a number of leading Democrats, including my counterpart, the Democratic leader, and most of our colleagues who are running for President, voted against this bipartisan consensus, but, overall, a huge majority of the Senate spoke up strongly.

I know many of us are keen on engaging in these important issues further in light of recent events. As the Senate debates our Middle East policy and contemplates what action to take, I believe it is important that we make a strong, forward-looking, strategic statement.

For that reason, my preference would be for something even stronger than the resolution the House passed yesterday, which has some serious weaknesses. It is so narrowly drafted that it fails to address the plight of imperiled Sunni Arab and minority Christian communities in Syria. It is backward-looking, and it is curiously silent on the issue of whether to actually sustain a U.S. military presence in Syria, perhaps to spare the Democrats from having to go on the record on this key question.

So my first preference is for something stronger than the House resolution. I look forward to continuing to engage with my colleagues on both

sides of the aisle as we chart the right course, and I expect many of us will have much more to say on the subject very soon.

S.J. RES. 53

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, on one final matter, this week, I have been discussing how Washington Democrats have sought for 3 years to effectively nullify the Trump Presidency. They have tried to cancel out the voters' decision in 2016 and dodge the consequences of Secretary Clinton's defeat whether it be through the 3-year-old impeachment parade that the House Democrats have been leading or through the unprecedented delays and obstruction that has been visited on the President's nominations here in the Senate.

Well, our Democratic colleagues will today mount yet another effort to fire up the time machine. They want to move forward with legislation that would undo a major regulatory reform success story of the Trump administration's and reopen the Obama administration's disastrous War on Coal. Specifically, they want to try and revive the so-called Clean Power Plan, which is a dangerous, misguided policy that the Trump administration has rightly done away with. We will be voting on this resolution later today.

The basic facts haven't changed since this job-killing scheme was first put forward back in 2014. This relic of the Obama administration would have further buried the producers of affordable American energy under a mountain of stifling redtape. It would have created overlapping local, State, and Federal standards, unrealistic compliance deadlines, and would have set up a Washington bureaucracy that would effectively root for American energy to fail. It is no wonder, by one analysis, that 125,000 jobs would have been on the chopping block had President Obama gotten his way.

The workers in my State know better than anyone the true costs of the last administration's misguided War on Coal. Kentucky workers know what happens when plants that create jobs and generate affordable electricity at the same time are simply shut down.

That is why I have been proud to lead the fight in ending the regulatory War on Coal. It is why I wrote every Governor in the country in 2015 and raised my concerns about the Obama administration's dangerous Clean Power Plan scheme, because, even today, nearly 3 years into an administration that is not at war with American energy, Kentucky miners continue to feel the effects of the previous administration's policies.

We also know that the full effects of the Clean Power Plan would have stretched far beyond coal country. The ripples of this harmful proposal would have been felt across the country by Americans in paying their power bills.

One independent report predicted that consumers in 40 States, including

Kentucky, would have seen double-digit percentage increases in their electricity costs, and by the Obama officials' own admissions, the proposal would have hit low-income and minority communities the hardest. Let me say that again: Low-income and minority populations would have been hit the hardest by the double-digit electricity bill increases in four out of every five States. That is quite a rap sheet for a Federal policy.

In a nation in which carbon emissions have already been trending downward, this proposal would have sold off our economic edge to overseas competitors whose emissions are, actually, steadily climbing. It would have taken the legs out from under American job creators while some of the world's leading polluters would have continued to roar right past us. It would have literally shipped our economic competitiveness to places like China and India.

Here is how experts estimated the effect of all of this self-inflicted economic damage on the climate: a one one-hundredth-of-1-degree difference by 2050. Here is the impact estimated to have happened if it had gone forward—a one one-hundredth-of-1-degree difference by 2050. Think how deeply you would have to be in the grip of leftwing ideology for that trade-off to sound like a good deal for American families.

Today's effort to revive this bad policy is being pushed by the same Senate Democrats who, overwhelmingly, could not bring themselves to vote against something as absurd as the Green New Deal back in March. Unfortunately, we know there is a considerable appetite among Democrats to inflict huge economic harm on American workers and American families just so we can better comply with this new green religion.

But here is the good news for my constituents in Kentucky and for hard-working Americans across the Nation: Senate Republicans are on the case, and we will not let far-left fashions take precedence over the common good of our country.

The American people have elected an administration and a Senate majority that trusts workers and job creators, not Washington bureaucracies. We have spent years cleaning up the mess of overregulation that the Obama era has left behind, and we will continue to stop the Democrats from reenacting that damaging history.

So I would urge all of my colleagues to join with us today and oppose these efforts to nullify a Presidency and take us backward.

Let's vote to keep this ill-conceived, leftwing policy on the shelf, where it belongs.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S.J. RES. 58 AND H.J. RES. 77

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I understand there are two bills at the desk due a second reading en bloc.